

## Chapter 102

Greg didn't recognize any of these faces. Who the fuck were they and where did they come from?

His eyes glazed over and he linked the mavericks who hadn't arrived, 'Do not let any hunters enter the field.'

'As you wish, Your Grace,' they chimed.

His octopus was going to kill him but he'd deal with that later. These set of rogues could kill three hunters at once if they were trained, which he hoped they weren't.

'Greg!' Lucy broke into his mind with a deafening snarl. 'Itam's reception is already as bad as it is, so why the HELL were you blocking out links?'

He didn't realize that he was. But between watching the drone in the cottage, listening to nonsense from the Robinsons, making sure Sush wasn't shot, wondering what the ticking thing under the kitchen cabinet was for, mentally formulating backup plans during the ride to the end of the tube trail, and contemplating on how to end the Robinsons lives, he may have unintentionally kept people out of his mind.

Taking in the growling creatures before him as his people gathered by his side, Greg replied, 'I'm about to be fully occupied very soon, my queen. How about a different question for now?'

'It's already starting, isn't it?' she responded almost monotonously, but he knew her long enough to know her worry had removed the earlier anger, and her perturbation was escalating. There was just that slight pitch in her voice that made all the difference - one only her allies and friends could hear.

Not wanting to express his shock, he casually uttered, 'Well, if you mean a battle with rogues I've never seen, along with proditors I didn't expect meeting, then yes, my queen. I probably have thirty seconds before

someone lunges. I hope none of the bloodsuckers are manipulation freaks.'

'And Sush?'

'Some of our own are holding her and the rest of the hunters back.'

'Don't know how long that would last.'

That wasn't encouraging. 'Then we have to finish this quickly. How did you know, by the way?'

'Margaret.' Of course. His guess was Tristan but who needed his people to report when the rulers had a clairvoyant wolf as a handy contact. 'We landed ten minutes ago and will be joining you shortly.'

'What did the fortune-teller see?' Though Greg wasn't sure if he wanted to know.

'Everything we're going to stop,' she uttered firmly before dropping the link.

The fact that she didn't want to tell him about the maggot's psychic vision was not a good sign, but if there was one thing he'd learn as the leader of rogues, it was to never consider negotiating when there was a chance of winning. And with backup coming, he was sure they'd be winning, hopefully at no cost on their end.

A voice boomed from the back, "KILL THEM ALL!" And many recognized it was Mr. Robinson, though none could see him.

Great. Now he had to plow through a team of strangers to reach the psychotic family.

Their opponents pounced with unsynchronized growls, three coming for Greg himself. They clearly knew who the leader was, and Greg didn't know whether it was the misfortune of being the largest in his group or being the only one to radiate the aura of a royal.

Shifting and charging forward, he came head-to-head with the first one, which was an easy kill: claws through her throat and body flung at one of her two friends. The second was more agile, but not more agile than

the queen – fortunately for Greg, who'd been undergoing one-on-one training sessions with her once a week for the past three years.

As he dodged two punches before delivering his own blow to the opponent's gut, considering and concluding he was not being manipulated to fight thin air or kill his own people, he began wondering how the Robinsons planned to win this. Everyone on his side had been trained under the best fighters for years. Their opponents were clearly not. While the third attacker sped to him, Greg still had time to look around and could see everyone was faring well, yet the queen's link still lingered.

The maggot's fortune-telling had been accurate in the times she had visions. Could this be the first time she was wrong?

As the thought came, so did a gunshot, quickly followed by another and another and another. The first bullet - to Greg's surprise - went to his opponent's body, making it slump onto him. Greg narrowly missed the second bullet aimed at his head. The second scraped his neck before he began using his opponent's body as a shield as he linked everyone to fall back, all using the trees for cover.

The small wound at his neck wasn't healing and he realized in dismay that it must have been oleander. He took a look at the corpse he dragged with him for cover, realizing these rogues must have been double-crossed.

Of course the Robinsons would have thugs on the battleground despite the risks. It wasn't just rogues and proditors anymore, apparently. He may have not even brought a knife to this gun fight but he did bring a few other things.

Checking that his people and the warriors had taken cover or were close to, he carefully reached for his torn up pants and dug out a cookie-shaped explosive that functioned akin to a human military squib - small, but it would still create significant damage. He'd heard the way his cousin and cousin-in-law called his little sweetheart, and felt this suited her - an explosive little cookie.